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ABSTRACT

The theme for the celebration of the Library of Congress treasures, "The World Encompassed," is suggested by the title of a nephew's account of Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the earth. This account is part of the Sir Francis Drake collection donated by patrons to the library. In April 1581, Drake was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I for what was then the most profitable enterprise in the history of seafaring. Drake's career can remind those accustomed to television images that show reality as though it has sharp edges of some easily forgotton ambiguities and fuzzy edges of the great history-making adventures--whether they are the circumnavigations of the earth or the circumnavigations of the mind. Of all the nation's institutions, none tries more strenuously, more grandly, or more effectively to encompass the world than the Library of Congress. The library's treasures bear witness to that endeavor. Drake's voyage reminds us that only rarely is some great world-encompassing project accomplished in a predicted time. Great enterprises are enterprises of high risk, and high risk means great uncertainty. The Library of Congress, or any great library, is a point of embarkation on voyages for which there can be no timetable. Commitment to any of the greatest enterprises--circumnavigation of the earth or of the English language or of the world of science--is heroic because it is a commitment to the unknown. (HTH)

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THE WORLD ENCOMPASSED

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Remarks at a dinner
held on March 19, 1981, in the Great Hall
in celebration of
the treasures of the Library of Congress

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

The Librarian of Congress

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The Center for the Book
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PREFACE

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress is pleased to present the remarks of Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin on March 19, 1981, at the opening of "The World Encompassed," an exhibition of treasures that have been given to the Library of Congress by generous donors. The exhibition takes its name from an account of Sir Francis Drake's voyages titled The World Encompassed, *published in London in 1628. This book is part of the rich Sir Francis Drake collection presented to the Library of Congress in 1980 by Hans P. and Hanni Kraus. As the Librarian says in his remarks, the exhibition seeks to honor the exploring spirit of the collector and the civic responsibility of the donor, emphasizing how the Library of Congress has been enriched by the joining of these two impulses.*

The Center for the Book, which was established in 1977 by Public Law 95-129, encompasses the world of books, reading, and the printed word. Drawing on the resources of the Library of Congress, the center works closely with other organizations to heighten the public's awareness of books, to use other media to promote reading, to stimulate the study of books, to encourage the international flow of books and other printed materials, and to improve the quality of book production. It pursues these goals primarily by bringing together members of the book, educational, and business communities for symposia and projects. The center's programs and publications are supported by tax-deductible gifts from individuals and organizations. Further information is available from the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

John Y. Cole
Executive Director
The Center for the Book

THE WORLD ENCOMPASSED

Our theme tonight, *The World Encompassed*, is suggested by the scintillating gift from Hans and Hanni Kraus of their Sir Francis Drake collection.

We are not sure precisely when Sir Francis Drake was born (sometime between 1540 and 1545) because he came from a Devonshire family that was so obscure. His impoverished father, a refugee from religious persecution, had to house his wife and some of his twelve children in an abandoned naval hulk in the Thames estuary. We do know that he died of a tropical fever on January 28, 1596, and was buried at sea the next day in the Caribbean off Porto Bello in Panama.

It will be exactly four hundred years ago next Saturday, on April 4, 1581, that Queen Elizabeth I went on board Drake's ship, *The Golden Hind*, to give him her accolade on completing his voyage around the world. As he knelt before her to be dubbed a knight, the Queen handed the gilded sword to the French Ambassador at her side. She asked him to perform the dubbing ceremony. By enlisting her ally to help honor the man who had made a career of plaguing the Spanish enemy for world-treasure and world-dominion, she made the knighting of Sir Francis an international event.

She was also celebrating one of the most profitable enterprises in the history of seafaring. When Drake's ship arrived in Plymouth harbor, it was laden above the watermark with Spanish coins, pearls, precious stones, bars of gold and silver, and rare spices (some, ounce for ounce, more valuable than gold). To please the Queen, Drake had ordered special trinkets for her, including a crown set with large emeralds and a diamond-encrusted frog (in honor of the French Ambassador whom the Queen had affectionately nicknamed her pet *grenouille*). Shareholders divided among them some £200,000, which meant that for every single pound invested they had a return of about £47.

Drake took a bonus of £10,000 for himself and £8,000 for his crew. For her share the Queen received £160,000, which was enough in those days to cover all expenses of the government for a whole year. In sixteenth-century money the total came to about a half-million pounds, amounting in twentieth-century money to not less than £30,000,000.

Drake, the prime national hero of the Elizabethan Age, an age replete with competing heroes, was the first captain to sail his own ship around the world, the first Englishman to sail the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the South Atlantic. He was celebrated in song and story, beginning with a Latin poem fastened, on that day of the ceremony, to the mainmast of *The Golden Hind*. Drake's ship, the English translation proclaimed, "Merits to be beset with Stars divine, Instead of waves, and in the Sky to shine." Elizabethan historians declared him "as famous in Europe and America, as Tamerlane in Asia and Africa." The Spanish Ambassador to England dubbed him "the master-thief of the unknown world."

Unfortunately, the best contemporary account of Drake's history-making voyage disappeared. The illustrated log written by Drake and his cousin was presented to Queen Elizabeth, who probably kept it locked up to guard its valuable commercial and geographic information from England's enemies. For a whole decade, this "classified" nature of Drake's log kept any full authentic account from being published. A half-century later, when Drake's nephew compiled the story from tales told by Drake's chaplain and other contemporaries, he gave his book the eloquently appropriate title *The World Encompassed* (London, 1628).

We are grateful to Sir Francis Drake, to Queen Elizabeth his sponsor, and to Hans and Hanni Kraus our benefactors, for the opportunity tonight to reflect together on the meaning of Drake's heroic adventure. The televised image tempts us to

believe that we see the sharp outlines of reality in all their true technicolor. Drake's career can remind us of some easily forgotten ambiguities and fuzzy edges of the great history-making adventures — whether they are the circumnavigations of the earth or (our stock-in-trade here at the Library of Congress) the circumnavigations of the mind.

The coat of arms designed for Sir Francis by the College of Heralds depicted a hand issuing from the clouds, drawing a ship around a terrestrial globe, below the words: *Auxilio Divino* ("By Divine Help"). The motto across the bottom of the arms read: *Sic Parvis Magna* (which we loosely translate as "Great things from small beginnings").

For us there may be other less obvious morals. After our fashion, we all try to encompass the world. Of all our institutions, none tries more strenuously, more grandly, or more effectively than the Library of Congress. The treasures of our Library and all who have helped us load our *Golden Hind* on Capitol Hill up to the watermark bear witness to our 181-year-long effort to encompass the world. We declare this, too, when we call ourselves a Multi-Media Encyclopedia. Here, even without the inspiration of a Virgin Queen, we sponsor circumnavigations of the mind.

In this season of budget-making we are preoccupied by plans and predictions. Heads of agencies aim at predicted objectives within predicted times and at predicted cost. Totalitarian governments are even more obsessed as they struggle grimly with their five- and ten-year plans.

Drake's great voyage reminds us that world-encompassing projects could seldom pass the predictive test of a hearing before an appropriations subcommittee. Great enterprises are enterprises of high risk. High risk means great uncertainty. Drake's famous predecessor, Magellan, who must have been on Drake's mind, himself died on his voyage of circumnavigation.

Magellan had begun with a complement of some 280 men, of whom only eighteen completed the round-the-world journey back to give thanks in the chapel in Seville. Yet Drake was undaunted.

We would not be far off the mark if we characterized a great enterprise as one for which a reliable timetable is impossible. By definition it is what has never before been accomplished. Who could have guessed that the circumnavigation by the remnant of Magellan's crew would require three years (less only twelve days)? Drake's own circumnavigation would take almost as long, measured out in accidents and opportunities beyond his imagining at the outset.

A project imagined by the Spanish conquistadores in the sixteenth century—a world-encompassing achievement, which would have pleased Drake—was a canal connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific across the Isthmus of Panama. In 1846 the United States took the first halting steps by a treaty with New Granada (now Colombia). Congress authorized a canal by the Spooner Act of 1902, work began in 1904, and the canal was not opened to traffic until August 15, 1914.

Only rarely is some great project of intellectual circumnavigation accomplished in a predicted time. The first controlled atomic fission and the landing of a man on the moon are exceptions in our own age. But such timely successes have been few, and they are seldom found in the world of letters. Take dictionaries, for example. After Dr. Samuel Johnson signed a contract in 1746 with a group of five London booksellers to produce a new dictionary of the English language, his published plan announced his intention to complete his work in three years. His *Dictionary* proved a phenomenal accomplishment when he completed it (in 1755) in nine! Adam Smith — who would devote no less than thirteen unpredicted years (1763-1776) to writing his *Wealth of Nations* — stood in awe and

admiration. The next great English dictionary, "the greatest treasure-house of any language in the world," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, was first conceived by the Philological Society of London in 1857. Despite the indefatigable efforts of James A. H. Murray and the unwilling volunteer efforts of his eleven children and of hundreds of eager more voluntary volunteers across the English-speaking world, the work was only half finished at Murray's death in 1915. The letter "Z" was not completed until 1925, and the *OED* is still being richly supplemented. One of the great works of scholarship in our time, the sixteen-volume *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, was only this last year completed with its index volume after seventeen years. Its noble publisher, Charles Scribner, now rejoices that at the outset it was impossible to guess either how long it would take or how much it would cost. Otherwise, he fears, he might never have undertaken it!

Our Library of Congress—any great library—is a point of embarkation on voyages for which there can be no timetable. Incidentally, though I am not sure it is relevant, the Madison Building of the Library of Congress, which was first conceived about 1959, is still not quite complete.

Commitment to any of the greatest enterprises then—the circumnavigation of the earth or of the English language or of the world of science, the entering into marriage or the conceiving of children—is heroic not because it involves a calculated risk but precisely because it is a commitment to the unknown.

But commitment does not mean purity of motive. Tennyson's Sir Galahad proclaimed without embarrassment: "My strength is as the strength of ten,/Because my heart is pure." Sir Francis Drake was a delightfully piratical, un-Galahad-like figure. World-encompassing heroes have generally been more like Drake than like Galahad. Great achievements come from mixed

— material and spiritual — motives. We can be glad that the American Revolution was a triumph for both commercial rights and for the Bill of Rights. Our representative, democratic government, devised with uncanny wisdom by the framers of our Constitution, was based on a wholesome suspicion of all who claimed unspotted purity of heart. But dictatorships and totalitarian governments must try to justify themselves by the supposed purity of purpose of their dictators or their commissars. American history has justified our founders' hopes that a decent society would depend on our ability to organize mixed motives into a federal community.

The utopian quest for purity of motive has been rooted in another kind of quest for purity. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). This command poses a conundrum for us in the Library of Congress. Here the path to otherworldly treasure is paved by books and maps and photographs and prints and music, by worldly knowledge and even by information. In a word, by the treasures which we celebrate here tonight, and by which we hope to see the world encompassed. But what perishable treasures they are! Books become brittle, photographs fade, films ignite.

Of all the enigmas suggested by Drake's enterprise, the most tantalizing is the mystery of consequences. We can be grateful for this mystery too. Every achievement produces its own kind of pollution in the currents of history. If we had the power to weigh all consequences in advance, what would we ever have dared? What would we ever have invented? "For in much wisdom is much grief," we are warned in Ecclesiastes, "and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Could we, then, be here tonight?

Besides God, Gold, and Glory, the purpose that Sir Francis Drake had in view was, above all, frustration of the King of Spain. Yet his enduring legacy over four centuries has been to open vistas of the circumnavigable world — commercial, geographic, geological, biological, anthropological, sociological. He still takes us on a flight of imagination. In thought, Sir Francis Drake lives for us, right here in the Library of Congress. And we discover his immortality in the *material* treasures which we celebrate tonight. We can still use the motto which Drake's nephew printed on the title page of his first publication of *The World Encompassed* — "Offered now at last to publique view, both for the honour of the actor, but especially for the stirring up of heroick spirits, to benefit their Countrie, and eternize their names by like noble attempts."

Both hemispheres of the Drake Silver Map or Silver Medal are reproduced on the cover of this pamphlet. The medal was issued to commemorate Sir Francis Drake's voyage around the world, 1577-1580, and shows the route of that circumnavigation. The Latin inscription on the cartouche in the ocean below Africa may be translated: "Michael Mercator made this. It is available at London near the church of the Frenchmen, 1589." Michael was the grandson of Gerardus Mercator, who devised the projection that bears his name.

The map is of considerable cartographic importance. It depicts not only the newly established colony of "Virginea," but also the Drake discoveries in Upper California. It is the second published map to include these features, apparently only preceded by the map inserted in the Hakluyt edition of Peter Martyr's *Decades* (1587).

The medal was reproduced in the exact size of the original by duotone offset at the American Printing Company of Washington, D.C. The booklet was printed on Mohawk Superfine natural white. Typographic composition in Trump Gravur, Trump Medieval, and type ornaments was executed at the Acorn Press in Rockville, Maryland, and General Typographers in Washington, D.C.

This booklet was printed in an edition of 3,000 copies and was designed by John Michael at the Acorn Press.